# To Keep Kids Off Social Media, the UAE Will ID Every User

*The under-15 ban is how the UAE signs on to a worldwide push for verified digital identity.*

By **Ken Macon** June 21, 2026 3 min read + Subscribe Share

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The UAE Cabinet has approved a resolution barring children under 15 from holding a social media account, state news agency Wam reported on Thursday, and enforcing it will mean verifying every user in the country, adult or child.

Anyone below 15 will be barred from creating, using or operating a personal account once the resolution is ratified and locked out of publishing, commenting, sharing and joining public groups or open channels. The Cabinet, led by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice

President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, gave companies up to 12 months to comply.

The rules cover any platform reaching users in the country, free or paid, that ranks or recommends content through algorithms, which is to say nearly all of them.

The resolution states plainly that a user simply saying how old they are will no longer count. With self-declaration off the table, companies have to verify age some other way, and every available option, from identity documents to facial analysis to behavioral profiling, means each adult hands over more of themselves to prove they are not a child.

The UAE Cabinet issues resolution regulating

# children's access to social media platforms and sets the minimum age for social media use at (15) years

**The resolution allows social media platforms to progressively implement the new standards through a transitional period of up to 12 months, in coordination with the relevant authorities, ensuring technical and regulatory readiness.**

## Key Provisions:

- Children under the age of 15 are prohibited from creating or using personal accounts on social media platforms and shall not be permitted to access their full features.
- Providing children between the ages of 15 and 16 with regulated and safe access to platforms subject to age-appropriate content classification, restricted interaction, regulated usage time, and parental controls.
- Platforms are required to implement accurate and reliable age verification mechanisms.
- Parental consent shall not constitute a valid exemption from the prohibitions or restrictions set out in the resolution.
- Platforms are required to monitor non-compliant accounts and take immediate action to enforce compliance.
- Prohibition of the use or processing of children's personal data for commercial purposes based on the tracking of their digital activities.
- Caregivers are responsible for actively supervising their child's permitted digital activity and promoting awareness of safe and responsible online practices.
- The resolution provides families with a clear framework and practical tools to help guide children toward more responsible and mindful digital engagement.

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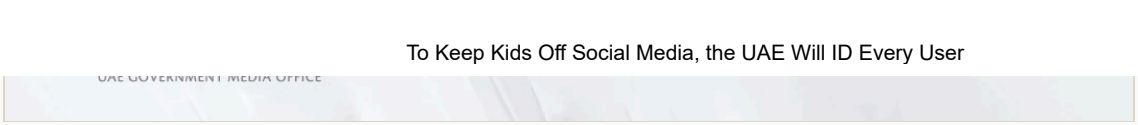


The resolution does carry privacy language and the wording reveals the tension at its center. Verification must "achieve a high level of accuracy…while adhering to the highest standards of child privacy and personal data protection."

Platforms are told to minimize data collection and avoid keeping it longer than strictly necessary. Those constraints sit on top of a system whose whole purpose is to extract verified identity from people who previously surrendered none, and the second goal undercuts the first no matter how carefully the first is phrased.

The Cabinet framed the resolution as an effort to "establish an advanced model for child protection in the digital space, reinforcing the national digital safety framework in line with the rapid evolution of technology use, and striking a balance between enabling responsible use of modern technologies and ensuring the highest standards of child protection."

Teenagers aged 15 and 16 may stay on, with what the resolution calls enhanced protective measures including "age-appropriate content classification and restriction, disabling high-risk features such as interaction with unknown users, regulation of usage time and duration, and the provision of parental control tools."

The UAE is not acting alone and that is the development with the longest reach. French President Emmanuel Macron thanked the country for "joining the movement," a global agenda that already spans Australia, the UK, and his own push in France.

Emmanuel Macron
@EmmanuelMacron
✅ Thanks for joining the movement.
Reuters @Reuters · Jun 18, 2026, 11:35 AM
UAE sets minimum social media age at 15, mandates age checks
reut.rs/4a4uuLk reut.rs/4a4uuLk
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Each government cites child protection and each builds the same thing underneath, a verified link between a real person and an online account.

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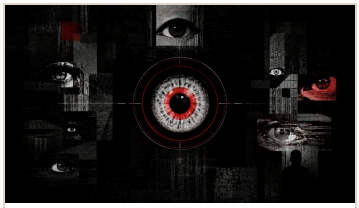

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